THE Spirituall Fishing.

A SERMON

Preached in *Cambridge* by that *Reuerend and Iudicious Diuine*,

Mr SAMVEL HIERON.

Printed by the true Copie written with his owne hands a little before his deceaſe.

LVKE 5. *Verſ.* 10. The laſt words of the Verſe.

Henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men.

AT LONDON
Printed by IOHN BEALE, for widow *Helme*, and are to bee ſold at her ſhop vnder St *Dunſtans* Church in Fleet-ſtreet. 1618.

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BIBLIOTECA
COLLANA

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Church in Fleet-street. 1614.

¶ To the VVorthy,

Religious, and Vertuous Lady, the
Lady MARGARET YELVERTON,
Wife to the much honoured, Sir
HENRY YELVERTON Knight,
the Kings Atturney Generall,
continuance of all happineſſe.

Madam,

NO ſooner came this Sermon vnto my hands, (the Author whereof for his approued zeale, worthily deſerued the title of an eminent Light and Ornament of our (church) then I vowed the dedication thereof vnto your Ladiſhip; Nor may it ſeeme vnworthy your fauourable acceptance (the principall aime of my expectance) in regard of

that singular testimony which all men that haue been conuersant in his Works, doe giue of the Author, being such a one as neither affection could corrupt, nor affectation transport, but of that spirit, as he was zealous with a good conscience, making humility his path to glory. In a word, (Madam) his former Labours (now reduced into one Volume) haue been euer countenanced by some choice Patrons: Nor may this (being equall with most of the rest) claime lesse prerogatiue then the rest. Thus wishing you that benefit for which it was intended, to the glory of God, whereto it is directed, I rest,

Your Ladiships
respectiuely,

I. B.

To the Christian Reader.

CHristian & curteous Reader, being moued by such who had interest in bringing to light this Sermon, that I would prefix some small Epistle, I would not hang backe from performing so small a kindnesse. And two considerations especially swaied mee to write a fewe lines in this kinde. The first whereof is the Authors great deserts towards the Church of God; great in teaching, great in writing. Many a man there is, who hauing learnedly, iudiciously, and plainly taught the truth of God, hauing taken heed to the Ministerie which hee receiued in the Lord, to fulfill it, and that in preaching alone; not withstanding he hath left his memoriall blessed vpon earth, euen in that regard and naked respect. But if there bee one man of a great companie, who as he taught religiously and powerfully in his life, so besides in his life he did write to the comfortable edification of the Church, and yea also left after his death other things to be published for the behoofe of Gods Saints, without question such a worthy may well haue double honour put vpon him. Many such deseruing instruments, hath God raised vp in our Church exceeding both for mouth, and penne: among the last of which, the Author of this Sermon need not to

bee

Pro.31.31. *he ranked.* His workes praise him in the gates *as Salomon speaketh of the vertuous Womans deeds. The second and third, nay the fift and sixt editions of certaine Treatises written by him, though in a dumb, neuertheless with a moouing rhetorick, spake effectually to his commendation. In the second place, that did not a little encourage me, that this Sermon (if much affection haue not dazled some eies) may well bee esteemed amongst one of the cheife he did deliuer. It was preached in a famous Vniuersitie, in a most learned, & ful auditory, it was heard with attention (his godly voice, & sanctified gesture enlueuing the hearers:) afterwards it was spoken of with reuerence and affection; at both hearing it, and hearing of it, I can truely auouch, it was his farewell Sermon to his Mother Vniuersitie, although not (I supose) in the Authors intent, yet in the euent: the Lord often directing matters otherwise then for the present wee dreame of. Receiue therefore Christian Reader this Sermon, sound for edification, sweete for application, shewing Ministers their duty, shewing people theirs, and therefore not vnwelcome to ad good either teachers, or learners. Thus wishing thee all blessing from God in this and all other like furtherances of thy deuotion, I recommend thee to the Lords mercie, beseeching him for Christ his sake, to fulfil euery honest desire of thy heart.*

Thine in our common Sauiour,

E. C.

THE Spirituall Fishing.

Text,

LVKE 5. *ver.* 10. The laſt words of that verſe,

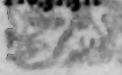
Henceforth thou ſhalt catch men.

WHereas heere our Saviour tranſlates this phraſe of *Fiſhing*, or catching, from an ordinary and inferiour courſe, vnto a more heauenly and ſpirituall buſineſſe, euen to the winning of ſoules; it giues very direct occaſion to handle theſe things.

Firſt, The ſtate of the world, which is as the Sea.

Secondly, the ſtate of the Church, which is as a Ship or Boate in the Sea.

Thirdly, the ſtate of men by nature, who be

Pro. 31. 31. 

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Firſt, The ſtate of the world, which is as the Sea.

Secondly, the ſtate of the Church, which is as a Ship or Boate in the Sea.

Thirdly, the ſtate of men by nature, who be

as Fiſhes ranging after their owne diſpoſition, vncaught.

Fourthly, the ſtate of Miniſters, who bee as Fiſhers.

Fiftly, the ſtate of the Goſpell preached, which is the hooke, or baite, or net to take ſoules.

Theſe things are not ſtrained or forced, but ariſe out of the place directly. For ſith *Peter* and the reſt muſt change their courſe, and fall to a new kind of *Fiſhing*; what is the Sea which they muſt lanch out into, but the World? what is the Boate, but the Church in which they labour, & to which they ſeek to gather ſoules? what is the booty they muſt ſeeke for, but the ſonnes of men? and what are they but ſo many Fiſhers? or what is their net, but the Goſpell, the word of Saluation which they Preach? Of euery of theſe I will ſpeake ſomething, and that briefly.

That the ſtate of the World, is as the Sea, it is plaine by theſe places; *Before the throne there was a Sea of glaſſe like vnto Chryſtall* (a), *In that day the Lord with his ſore and great and mighty ſword ſhall ſlay the Dragon that is in the Sea* (b): And the ſtate of the World is as the Sea in a fourfold reſpect; firſt, becauſe of the generall vnſtableneſſe of the things thereof. The vnſedledneſſe of that vaſt creature the Sea is well knowne. It is in continuall motion (it cannot *reſt*[c] it) ebbes and flowes perpetually: ſometimes (at a Springtyde) it ſwels to that bigneſſe, that the bankes cannot

a Reu. 4. 6.

b Iſ. 27. 1.

The State of this World compared to the Sea in 4. reſpects.

I.

c Iſai. 57. 20.

cannot containe it; ſometimes againe, it falles backe ſo low, that a man muſt goe farre from the banke before hee can come neere it. It is (vnder God) chiefly gouerned by the Moone, then the which there is no one thing more ſubiect vnto change, it being neuer beheld two nights together in one proportion. Thus is the World, whether wee looke vpon the generall ſtates of Kingdomes, or the perſonall eſtates of particular men, either for their goods or for their bodies, wee ſee nothing but a continuall alteration: Crownes are tranſlated from head to head, and Scepters paſſe from one hand to another; fenced Cities are made heapes, and walled Townes become as the plowed fields: they which were once faſtened as a nayle in a ſure place, and hauing ſet their neſts on hie, dreamed of nothing but perpetuities for them & theirs, are ſuddenly throwne out of all, and *rolled and turned like a ball* (d). *The great houſes are ſmitten with breaches* (e) *& the wide dwellings and large chambers, ſieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion* (f), *are in a moment left without an inhabitant* (g). *Haman* is to day *the ſecond in the Kingdome*, but ſtript of all, is hanged vp to morrow (h). This yeare is *Ieruſalem the Princeſſe among the Prouinces*, but the next yeare *made tributarie* (i); her nobles which did erewhile *put on ſcarlet, do now embrace the dung* (k). Now doth *Nebuchadnezzar walke in his royall palace of Babel*, priding himſelfe in his outward ſtate; *but while the*

d Iſ.22.18.
e Am.6.11.
f Ier.22.14.
g Iſ.5.9.
h Heſt.7.10.
i Lam.1.1.
k Lam 4.5.

word was in the Kings mouth, a voice came downe from Heauen, ſaying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee bee it ſpoken, thy Kingdome is departed from
l Dan.4.26. &c. *thee,* [l] *&c.* : Yeſterday *Iobs* cattell went out by their thouſands, he had both ſonnes and daughters to doe him honour, and ſeruants at his command : to day heere is not a hoofe to bee ſeene in his ground, not a childe to call him bleſſed, not a ladde left to attend him. This is the vncertainty of this ebbing and flowing World, *the faſhion of*
m 1.Cor.7.31 *it goeth away* [m].

2. 2. Becauſe of the tumultuouſneſſe of it : who is ignorant of the ſtormes and grieuous tempeſts which are at Sea ? There eſpecially *men ſee the workes of the Lord and his wonders in the deepe: For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy winde, and*
n Pſal.107. 24.25. *it lifteth vp the waues thereof* [n]. The World is a fit patterne heereof, in reſpect of the continuall ſtirs and troubles that are in it: Nation againſt Nation by warres, man againſt man by diuers kindes of contentions; of euery one that liues therein is the ſaying of *Iob* verified, *Man that is borne of a*
o Chap 14.1. *woman is full of trouble* [o], *Man is borne vnto tra-*
p Chap.5.7. *uaile, as the ſparks fly vpward* [p]. It was the puniſhment which God layed vpon him, that in *ſorrow*
q Gen.3.17. *hee ſhould eate his bread all the daies of his life* [q]: and albeit ſome haue a more calme paſſage then ſome
r Chap.2.5. others haue, or like *Ionas* [r] *can lye and ſleepe*, when others are toſſed with the ſtorme, yet none can liue without ſome vexation ; he is not alwaies ca-

ried

ried with full tayles to the end of his deſires.

3. The world reſembles the Sea by the oppreſſion that is in it. At Sea the leſſer fiſhes are a prey to the great ones; and in the World, the rich and mightie ſwallow vp the poore [s]: one man bites and deuoures another [t]; *Manaſſeth, Ephraim*; *Ephraim, Manaſſeth* [u]. To this pertaines that of the Prophet, *That men are made as the fiſhes of the Sea* [x]. 3.

[s] Am.8.4. [t] Cal.5.15. [u] Iſ.9.21. [x] Hab.1.14.

4. In reſpect of the ſway the Diuell beares in it. Obſerue what is in the Pſame, *The Sea is great and wide, there is that Leuiathan whom the Lord hath made to play therein* [y]. Now looke how this monſter domineeres in the Sea, ſo doth Sathan heere in the World: therefore he is called *the God of this World* [z], and ſaid to *worke in the children of diſobedience* [*]: And to iuſtifie this compariſon, as the World is called the Sea, ſo is the Diuell *Leuiathan* [a]. Thus we ſee how the World is compared to the Sea: The ſtate of the Sea is vncertaine, ſo is the World; it is tempeſtuous, ſo is the World full of tumult: In it the great fiſhes deuoure the leſſe, ſo in the World the poore and weake are a ſpoile to the mightie: Leuiathan takes his pleaſure in the Sea, ſo doth Sathan rule and beare ſway in the World. 4.

[y] Pſal.104.26 [z] 2.Cor.4.4. [*] Epheſ.2.2. [a] Iſ 27.1.

To preſſe forward the counſell of S. *Iohn, Loue not the world neither the things that are in the world* [b]. *Vſe.*

[b] 1.Epiſt.2.15

The Doctrine now deliuered, affoords a ſtrong reaſon to enforce it: For where there is ſo much

much vncertaintie, so much confusion and trouble, such oppression and cruelty, where the Diuell beareth such exceeding sway; what is there to be found worth delighting in? A man imagines himselfe sure in respect of his outward estate; at an instant comes as it were a waue and washeth away all: he promiseth peace and quietnesse to himselfe; suddenly ariseth a storme, and puts him to a trouble which he thought not of: much adoe shall he haue to escape the hands of the oppressor, be he as he will; nay, the better and holyer he is, so much the more that great Leuiathan that olde serpent hath him in continuall chase. Marke and consider, oh ye men of the earth, all whose striuing and plotting and plodding is for the world; consider what it is vpon which you dote and with which you are enamoured so exceedingly; it is euen a very Sea of vncertainties and bottomelesse Ocean of confused vexation, the very hold & kingdome of the diuell. We hunt after it, but where is our assurance when we haue got it? or what haue we procured to our selues, but vanitie and vexation of spirit? The further we wade into it, the further are we from the Lord: for *the amitie of the World is the enmitie of God* [c], and the more businesse we haue in it, in the greater hazard we are to *be drowned in perdition & destruction* [d]. Happy were it for vs if the meditation of this point touching the proportion which is betwixt the World and Sea, were able to vnglue and

[c] Iam. 4. 4.

[d] 1. Tim. 6. 9.

vn-

vntwiſt our affections, which are ſo neerely tyed vnto it, and to ſtirre vs vp like paſſengers by Sea to long for the Hauen, and to ſtriue for that eternall reſt, a kingdome not of vncertaintie, but which cannot be ſhaken; a place not of trouble, but *where ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, neither crying, neither ſhall be any more paine* [c]. There the prince of darkeneſſe cannot endanger; for *the Lamb is the light of it* [f], and God himſelfe ſhall be all in all to thoſe that dwell therein [g]. This is the Vſe.

[c] Reu.21.4.
[f] ver.23.
[g] 1.Cor.15.28.

THe next thing is touching the Church: *The ſtate thereof in the World is like the ſtate of a Ship or Boate vpon the Sea*; And that eſpecially in this reſpect: Becauſe it is ſubiect to continuall toſſings. The ſtate of the Church in this world, compared to a ſhip or boat vpon the Sea.

Of Trauailers by Sea it is ſaid, that they are toſſed too and fro, and ſtagger like drunken men, and all their cunning is gone [h]. Not vnlike to this is the ſtate and condition of Gods Church. It fareth with it, as with the Ship *Ionas* was in; There was a mightie tempeſt in the Sea, ſo that the Ship was like to be broken [i]: or which the Diſciples were in; There aroſe a great tempeſt in the Sea, ſo that the Ship was couered with waues [k]. Such was the ſtate of the Church of old, the members whereof complained, how *the waters had almoſt drowned them, and the ſtreame had gone ouer their ſoule* [l]. And *Dauid* as a man experienced in

[h] Pſal.107.27
[i] Chap.1.4.
[k] Mat.8.24.
[l] Pſal.124.4.

such stormes, cryeth out to God [m], *Saue me for the waters are entred, euen to my soule*: and *deliuer and take mee out of the great waters* [n]. And as it was with the Ship in which *Paul* was so exceedingly hazarded, *that they saw neither Sunne nor Starres in many daies* [o]: so the Church of God, is often driuen into that extremitie, that it is for a time, euen deprined of all ordinary comfort, and seemes to bee without all hope of any more refreshing. Hence are these complaints of the Church, *O God why hast thou put vs away for euer? Why is thy wrath kindled against the sheepe of thy pasture? thinke vpon thy congregation &c.* [p]; and *wilt thou be angry with vs for euer? and wilt thou prolong thy wrath from one generation to another? wilt thou not turne againe &c.* [q]. Thus *Dauid* as a trauailer in this Ship, cryed out, *Will the Lord absent himselfe for euer? and will he no more shew fauour* [r]? And *Heman* the *Ezrahite*; *Lord why dost thou reiect my soule, and hidest thy face from me* [s]? It is a law that cannot be broken, that the chosen of God *must thorow many afflictions enter into the kingdome of God* [t]; God hath so appointed for his owne glory.

[m] Psal.69.1.
[n] Psal.144 7.
[o] Act.27.20.
[p] Psal.74.1 2.
[q] Psal.85.5.6
[r] Psal 77.7.
[s] Psal. 88. 14.
[t] Act.14.22.

1. First, the troubles of his Church and the afflictions of his people, do make his power and mercy to be knowne; euen as the skill of a Pilot, is most to be seene in a storme: *My power is made perfect through weakenesse* [u]. The Lord bringeth matters to an exigent, and suffereth them to come to the very

[u] 1.Cor.12.9.

very brinke of hazard, that ſo his might and goodneſſe in the deliuery of his ſeruants may be the more apparent. When the Church of *Iſrael* was in a wonderfull ſtrait, the Sea before them, the mountaines on both ſides, the enemyes at their heeles, *Now* (ſayth God) *I will get me honour vpon Pharaoh, and vpon all his hoſt: the Egyptians alſo ſhall know that I am the Lord*[x]. [x] Exod. 14.4.

2. For their good: firſt, It makes them to looke vpward with the greater feruency. *Dauid* ſayth of ordinary paſſengers by Sea, that when *they mount vp to the heauen, and deſcend to the deepe, ſo that their ſoule melteth for trouble &c. then they cry vnto the Lord in their trouble &c.* [y]. The Mari- [y] Pſal. 107.28.
ners with *Ionas* when the ſtorme was vp, downe were they vpon their knees, *and euery man cryed vnto his God* [z]. And ſo the ſwelling waues of af- [z] Ionas 1.5.
flictions, do not quench but kindle the deuotion of Gods ſeruants: *In their affliction they will ſeeke me diligently* [a]. Secondly, it makes them long ſo [a] Hoſea 5.15.
much the more for the Hauen (where they would be.) Note *Paules* dayly dying, and the continuall troubles which he was expoſed vnto, made him long to be diſſolued [c], and to be as glad when his [c] Phil.1.23.
time of departing was at hand [d], as the poore [d] 2.Tim.4.6.
weather-beaten Mariner is to ſee the land. Thirdly, it makes the deliuerance when it comes to be the more eſteemed [e], *When they are quieted they* [e] Pſal.107.30.
are glads and double welcome is that refreſhing which comes at the very pinch of neceſſity. The

redeeming of *Danids life from the graue*, the rayſing him vp from the very mouth of the pit, made him to vow with himſelfe *neuer to forget* f.

f Pſa.103.2.4.

Vſe 1. This ſerues to admoniſh all that feare God, what they muſt make proviſion for, if they will be ſaued. By their profeſſion, they are entred into the Church of God, not as into a Garden of pleaſure, where they may aduenture to ſay euery one to *his ſoule, Soule, liue at eaſe, eate, drinke, and take thy paſtime* g; but as into a Ship, a houſe of continuall motion, where though there may be calmeneſſe for a time, the Sun ſhining out, the winds layd, and the Sea ſmooth, yet it is wiſedome to be in continuall expectation of a ſtorme. God hath not called vs vnto eaſe and quier, but to the croſſe. Many things are to be endured betwixt our ſetting out here, and our arriuall at the Land of Promiſe. Many ſtormes to bee gone through, many rocks and ſands to be aduentured by, many Pirats ſeeking the ſpoyle of our ſoules to be grapled with, before the hauen of Reſt can be entred into. The ignorance, or the inconſideration of this point hath deceiued many. They may thus fitly be ſhadowed out. Some freſh trauailer ſtanding vpon the ſhore in a faire day, and beholding the Ships in their beautie lye readie rigged and trimmed in the Harbor, thinks it a gallant thing to goe to Sea, and will needs aduenture; but being out a league or two, and feeling by the rocking of the Ship his ſtomacke begin to worke

g Luke 12.19.

worke and grow ſicke, and his ſoule euen to abhorre all manner of meat; or otherwiſe a ſtorme to ariſe, the wind and the water as it were conſpiring the ouerthrow of the veſſell, and euery ſea carrying in it the face of death; forthwith repents his folly, and makes vowes, that if he can once recouer the ſhore, he will bid an eternall farewell vnto all ſuch voyages. Thus, there be who in the calme dayes of peace, when Religion is not ouerclowded by the times, that will needs ioyne themſelues to the number of Gods people, they will be as earneſt and forward as the beſt. But when a tempeſt begins to appeare, and the Sea to grow rougher then at the firſt entry, the times alter, trouble is rayſed, and many croſſe winds of much oppoſition and gainſaying begin to blow, they are weary of their courſe, and will needs be ſet aſhore againe, reſoluing neuer to thruſt themſelues into any more aduentures. How needfull then is it that Chriſtians ſhould often remember, how by Chriſts ſpeech here, the Church is neceſſarily reſembled to a Ship? enter not into it, to be a guide or a paſſenger, a Miniſter, or a profeſſor, vnleſſe thou reſolutely make prouiſion for a ſtorme. Till the end of the voyage there is no reſt to be looked for: wherein notwithſtanding this may be for a comfort, that this Ship (the Church of God) hath a priuiledge which none hath elſe, no not the greateſt Gallioun or Argoſy vnder heauen; It may be toſſed, but can neuer be drow-

ned: *Though the waters of the ſea rage and bee troubled, and the mountaines ſhake at the ſurges thereof; God is in the midſt of it, therefore ſhall it not be moued, God ſhall help it very early* [h]. It is as the Arke of *Noah*, which (becauſe God had ſhut it vpon *Noah*) therefore it was borne vp euen amidſt the waues [i]; or as the Boate in which Chriſt was [k], which was welneere couered with waters, yet at an inſtant, by the command of him which is the Lord of the Sea, there followed a gracious calme. Chriſt is the Pilot, and (as was ſayd of *Paul*) *God hath giuen to him all that ſayle with him* [l], *and he will giue them eternall life, and they ſhall neuer periſh* [m].

h Pſal. 46 5.

i Gen. 7. 16. 17

k Mat. 8. 24. 26

l Act. 27. 24.

m Iohn 10. 28.

Vſe 2 The ſecond vſe ſerues to teach vs (becauſe the Church of God is as a Ship in this ſea of the world) the neceſſity of furniſhing our ſelues with ſuch things as appertaine to this ſpirituall voyage: not to inſiſt vpon many, two things eſpecially muſt be looked too. Firſt, That we be diligent in obſeruing the direction appointed by God, for the true guidance of our courſe. The Sea-men haue their Card and their Compaſſe, they haue the Sun and Stars, and the motions of heauen to direct them. That which our courſe muſt be guided by is the word of God; it is like the pillar that went before the hoſt of *Iſrael* according to the mouing or ſtanding whereof they ordered all their iourneyes. Hither may be referred that of

2. Epiſt. 1. 19. *Peter* [n], *We haue a moſt ſure word of the Prophets, to which ye do well that ye take heed, as vnto a light that ſhineth*

ſhineth in a darke place. It is an alluſion to a Sea-courſe: when the Admirall hangs out a Lanterne, and all that come behind ſteere to that. We cannot wander if we be led by this light: It is that good Spirit which *Dauid* prayed *to be led by vnto the land of righteouſneſſe* [o]. What other Load-ſtar of cuſtome, or opinion or faſhion of the times men attend vpon, they muſt needs run vpon the rocks and make ſhipwrack of the faith. Secondly, That we take with vs the knowledge and faith of Gods promiſes. It is called *the Anchor*, *Hebr.* 6. 19. This is our ſtay, in the day of tempeſt; *I know whom I haue beleeued* [p]: ſuch an one *cannot be moued, for his heart is fixed, and beleeueth in the Lord* [q]. The promiſes being either not knowne or not applied, the ſoule is toſſed without reſt, and muſt needs be ouerwhelmed with deſpaire. This *Anchor* being tyed to the ſoule by the ſtrong *cable* of a liuely faith, giues comfort vnto it in the greateſt ſtorme.

o Pſal. 143. 10.

p 2. Tim. 1. 12.

q Pſal. 112. 7.

THE third thing is concerning the ſtate of men. The fiſh to be catched out of this Sea, and to be brought into this Ship, are men, *Thou ſhalt catch men from hence-forth.* From whence this is gathered:

The ſtate of mē by nature compared to fiſhes in the Sea, ranging after their owne diſpoſition vncaught.

That we are all by nature in the ſtate of condemnation. This is cleere out of this place. By this *fiſhing*, or *catching* (the very ſubſtance of the Miniſters office) is meant, *a bringing of men into the*

Doctrine.

way of life. Now then, in as much as we are all by nature vncaught (otherwiſe why ſhould Chriſt ſend out his Apoſtles to take vs?) it followeth, that we are all by nature without grace, euen in the very gulfe and iawes of eternall woe. This is eaſily prooued by the Scriptures; *All fleſh hath corrupted his way vpon the earth*[r]. *The Lord looked downe from heauen vpon the children of men, to ſee if there were anie that would vnderſtand and ſeeke God. All are gone out of the way: they are all corrupt, there is none that doth good, no not one*[s]. *All we like ſheepe haue gone aſtray: we haue turned euery one to his owne way*[t]: *By nature the children of wrath aſwel as others*[u]; *without Chriſt, and were aliens from the Commonweath of Iſrael, and were ſtrangers from the Conenant of Promiſe, and had no hope, and were without God in the world*[x]: *Vnwiſe, diſobedient, deceiued, ſerving the luſts &c.*[y] *Deſtruction and calamitie are in our waies*[z].

r Geneſ.6.12.
s Pſal 14.2.3.
t Iſa.53.6.
u Epheſ.2.3.
x Verſe 12.
y Titus 3.3.
z Rom.3.16.

And well in this are we compared vnto the fiſh: For as the fiſhes skippe and play and take their pleaſure in the ſea, and are vnwillingly taken in the net, and labour to get out, and being in the boate, would faine, if they could, leape backe into the ſea; ſo naturally wee take pleaſure in our ſinfull wayes. *It is a paſtime for a foole to do wickedly*[a]. The net of the Goſpell muſt encloſe vs; of our ſelues we abhor it, and to the death will not come within the compaſſe of it; and being entangled, we deſire ſtill to be looſed, and to returne againe

a Prou 10.23.

vnto

vnto our wonted courſe. This is the verie true ſtate of vs all. We neither are in the ſtate of grace by nature, neither doe we deſire it. We be plunged into a ſea of miſerie, and in our owne diſpoſition we would neuer forſake it.

It were well for vs, if we could learne by this to ſee our ſelues what we be, and what we would euer be, if we were left to the ſwinge of our owne affections. Nature hath (as it were) ſpawned vs forth into this worldly ſea: and as it ſelfe *lieth in wickednesse* [b], *ſo do we drinke iniquitie like water* [c]. *It is ſweete vnto vs in our mouth, and we hide it vnder the tongue, we ſauour it, and will not forſake it, but keepe it cloſe in the mouth* [d]. We neither know the meanes of our ſaluation, nor affect it when it is offered. Either the Scripture is falſe, or this is true. How happy were we if this could humble vs! it would make vs afrayd of following our owne thoughts, or of being led by the ſway of our owne hearts. Our not knowing the miſerie of our owne eſtate, is the cauſe of all the ſecuritie, of all the profaneneſſe, of all the boldneſſe in ſinne, of all the contempt of Gods word which is in the world at this day. This place among others, is as a glaſſe to ſhew vs what wee are; ſtrangers from ſaluation, and as farre from anie inclination to it as a fiſh is from a will and deſire to be caught.

[b] 1 Iohn 5 19
[c] Iob 15.16.
[d] Iob 20.12.13

THe fourth thing is of the ſtate of the Miniſter. Heere are two things: Firſt, the ſtate of the Mini- The ſtate of miniſters, who be as Fiſhers.

Miniſterie: Secondly, the labour, buſineſſe and worke of the Miniſterie. Of the firſt thus we ſee:

Doctrine 1. *That it is no ſuperfluous or needeleſſe function, but a calling of great neceſſitie for the winning and ſauing of mens ſoules.* This is euident out of this place. The Lord intending the conuerſion of ſome, and being able diuers waies to accompliſh his purpoſe in that behalfe, yet hath thought it good to ſingle out this meanes among all the reſt, euen by man to catch man, and by his miniſterie to bring ſoules into his Kingdome. This is that which the Apoſtle ſaith, *Ephe.* 4.11.12. *He gaue ſome to be Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Euangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the repairing of the Saints, for the worke of the Miniſtery.* The Saints which belong to the election of grace, being ſcattered vp on the earth here and there, his pleaſure is by *Paul* and *Timothie* to *gather* them together vnto himſelfe. They be the Lords *Labourers* to bring in his *Harueſt* [e], his *Workemen* to aduance his *building* [f], his *Shepheards* to *take heed vnto his flocke* [g], the *Starres* in his *right hand* to giue light vnto his *Church* [h]. There being thouſands of ſoules to be ſaued in *Iurie*, the Lord will haue them to be brought in by *Peters* miniſterie [i]. *Philip* muſt be ſent to catch the *Samaritans* and the *Eunuch* [k]. In *Corinthus* there was a great draught (*I haue much people in this Citie:*) therefore there *Paul* muſt goe to worke [l]. Heere is the neceſſitie of the calling.

e Matt. 9.38.
f 1 Cor 3.9.
g Acts 20.28.
h Reuel. 1.20.
i Acts 2.41.
k Acts 8.
l Acts 18.10.

Vſe. To reproue their prophane and wretched opi-

nion

nion, who thinke, that among all the professions which are at this day in the world, that of the Ministerie may best be spared. It is strongly thought by many, that it were no danger or preiudice to mens soules, though there were no Minister at all to instruct them. O say some, what neede they trouble themselues? Euerie man must answer for his owne soule; and if we do not as we should, we shall beare the blame.

Thus they would shift off all dependance vpon the ordinance of God, and lay an imputation of superfluitie vpon that calling, by which it is the pleasure of God to saue those that beleeue. This one place is sufficient to stop their mouth; For I may truly auouch it out of the words heere, that (ordinarily) there is no more hope of a mans saluation without an able and industrious Minister, then there is that the fish in the Sea will of it selfe come ashoare, and offer it selfe vnto vs without the labour of some, to go out into the deep with boates and nets to bring them in. *Henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

Secondly, thus: *That the calling of the Minister is not a idle calling, but a calling of labour, a calling of much businesse and of great employment.* Doctrine 2.

The Ministers are fishers, whether that be not a profession of much labour, iudge you. To make the thing it selfe manifest, this is worthie to be obserued; That the most names giuen in the Scripture to men of this calling, doe betoken la-

bour; *Seers*[m], *Watchmen*[n], *Embassadours*[o], *Labourers*[p], *Disposers*[q], *Husbandmen*[r], *Seedesmen*[s], *Shepheards*[t], *Cryers*[u]. There is no title given them, but implieth action, yea and industry very great. *It is a worthie worke*[x], their *Maintenance* is with that condition[y]; otherwise no title, no name nor shew can free them from Contempt[z].

It meeteth with two euills in Ministers; first, the idlenesse which hath ouertaken some that are called to this busie profession; They are such as the Prophet reproueth, *Watchmen that are blinde, that haue no knowledge, that are dumbe dogges and cannot barke: that lie and sleepe and delight in sleeping*[a]. I take no pleasure in laying open the nakednesse of men of mine owne coate: yet God forbid that I should vse my tongue to the licking of their sores, which prooue the very bane of Gods Church, and doe make it lie like the field of the sluggard, or as the garden of the idler. Secondly, the spirit of greedinesse which (is to be feared) is in many. *They can neuer haue enough &c.*[b]. They goe out to catch, yet not soules to God, but preferments to themselues, and are still fishing for aduauncement. They haue not learned that of the Apostle: *I seeke not yours, but you*[c]; It is not your fauour which I doe affect, it is not your wealth which I seeke for, it is your saluation which I endeuour. This is the honour of a mans ministerie, the glorie and crowne of his calling.

Vse 2. It ouerthroweth the common fancie of the people,

[m] 1. Sam. 9. 9.
[n] Ezech. 3. 17.
[o] 2 Cor. 5. 20.
[p] Matth. 9. 38.
[q] 1. Cor. 4. 1.
[r] Mat. 12. 2.
[s] 1. Cor. 3. 9.
[t] Iohn 10. 2.
[u] Lu. 3. 4.
[x] 1. Tim. 3. 1.
[y] 1. Thes 5. 13
1. Cor. 9 14.
[z] Matth. 5 13
[a] Isa. 56. 10.
[b] Isa. 56 11.
[c] 2 Cor. 12 14

people, who account the Ministers calling to be an idle and a lazie calling; we get our liuings easily in the conceit of some, and it is no sinne nor pitty (in their vnderstanding) to defraud vs; and how vsuall is it in the mouthes of many, to say, Wee must labour for them? I confesse, that as some vse it, it is a calling of excessiue idlenesse, if they be such as *feede themselues, and feede not the flockes*[d], such as take *away the key of Knowledge*[e]; but consider it in it owne nature, and as it ought to be performed, we shall finde it to be a seruice of greater businesse. Let *Peter*, or anie successour of *Peter* busie himselfe (as he must) sometimes in preparing, sometimes in mending, sometimes in casting abroad, sometimes in drawing in his net; no man shall haue any iust cause to twit him with idlenesse, or to say, That because he is a Minister, therefore he hath an easie occupation.

d Ezech. 34.1
e Lu. 11. 52.

THe last thing is, *That the nette in which men must be taken, is the preaching of the Gospell.* Christ heere acquainting them generally with his purpose how to employ them, after changed the phrase when it came to the point of execution; and he which now spake of fishing, tolde them afterwards of preaching, *Matth.* 10. *chapter verse* 7. of *Teaching the nations*[f]; of *Declaring the Gospell to euerie creature*[g]; of *Feeding his sheepe*[h]; and Christ himselfe compareth the Gospell to a net,

Doctrine. The state of the Gospell preached, compared to a hooke, baite, or net, to catch mens soules.

f Matt. 28 19.
g Mar. 16. 15.
h Iohn 21. 15.

net [i]. The compariſon agreeth fitly after this maner:

i Matt. 13.47.

The preaching of the Goſpell is like to a net; firſt, in the generall drift and vſe: the vſe of a net is to take fiſh: the drift of preaching is to bring in ſoules. Secondly, in the ordering of it: It is not the net lapped vp together that bringeth in the draught, but haled out at length and ſpread forth that encloſeth the fiſh: It is the opening and vnfolding of the Goſpell, the ſtretching it out by preaching which doth encompaſſe ſoules. There may a fiſh or two hang in the net being let downe on a heape, but that is a chaunce, and is no wiſe aduenturing. The word read, and ſo brought in (as it were) in groſſe, may (by the mercy of God) take ſome; but we haue no warrant from hence to make a rule generall. Againe, it is neede that the nette be ſtrong, otherwiſe the greater kinde will breake through, and make all the labour and charge to be in vaine; ſo it is meete that the Doctrine be well ſtrengthened out of the word of God, that it be well prooued, that it be well preſſed and applyed, that the conſciences of the hearers may be convicted, and that they may ſee it is God, and not man with whom they haue to do. For a man ſhall meete with many froward and wilfull and violent natures, that will not be held in, but when they feele themſelues within the net will cry, *Let vs breake their bands, and caſt their*

k Pſalm.2. *cords from vs* [k], ſo that euen a kinde of violence

may

may be vſed to keep them from deſtruction. Thirdly, in the ſucceſſe of it. Many a draught the poore Fiſherman makes and taketh nothing, yet he leaueth not off: many a time is the net of preaching ſhot forth, and yet none conuerted thereby: ſo it pleaſeth God to exerciſe the patience of his ſeruants; yet ſtill the worke muſt be followed, and the Lords leiſure muſt be waited for. Often doth the net incloſe many, which yet after breake away; and many are at firſt drawne in by the power of the Goſpell, which yet afterwards ſlide backe and returne againe to their old profaneneſſe. There is much brought in in the Net, which yet is good for nothing when it is got: There come in frogs, and weeds, and a great deale of traſh, which in the end is caſt away, though for the loue of the fiſh there were no little paines in drawing it in: ſo, as it is ſhewed *Matth.* 13. 47. &c. many hypocrites and reprobates are gathered into the outward ſocietie of the Church by preaching, and ſo are let alone like weedes vntill the day of harueſt, *Matth.* 13. 30. Thus as our calling is to be fiſhers, ſo our Net is preaching.

It ſhewes plainely, that all the enemies and aduerſaries of preaching, are enemies to the good and ſaluation of mens ſoules. This is the Net, and without this I will not feare to ſay, that ſurely men ſhall periſh in their ſinnes. The diuell that great hunter after ſoules, laboureth by his inſtruments, euen with the very ſpirit of his helliſh poli- *Vſe.*

cie, to disgrace this course, to suppresse it, to put it downe, to draw men from affecting it. He knoweth it to be the meanes to abridge his kingdome, he feareth the pulling of some soule or other out of his clutches at euery Sermon. Let vs not suffer our selues to be cosined by his wiles. Let me that am a Minister remember the Seruice I am called to, euen to *catch men*, to win soules, let me be euer plying this businesse; and you (*Beloued*) when the Lords Net is cast in among you, run not from it, grudge not at it, presse and striue to be brought within the compasse of it, otherwise you shall continue within the sea of this world still, and shall neuer be saued. Fishes doe die if they be taken; wee can not escape eternall death if we be not caught. The hooke may be sharpe, but the baite is sweet, and it will seeme a yoake to our nature, to be knit vp (as in a Net) and to be restrained from our owne wonted carnall liberty; but let vs looke to the end, which is the saluation of our soules.

(***)

FINIS.